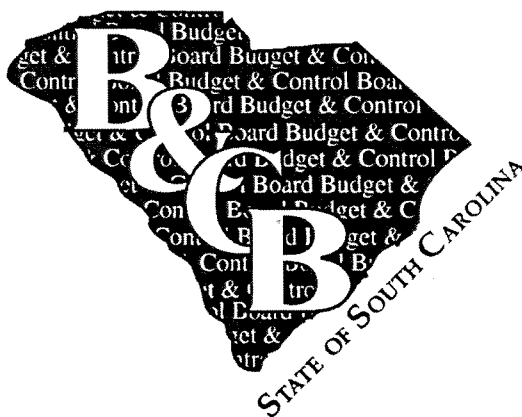


May 22, 2004

State Government News Summary



**Prepared by the Budget and Control Board
Office of the Executive Director**



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State jobless rate up slightly

Posted Friday, May 21, 2004 - 7:57 pm

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By Jenny Munro
BUSINESS WRITER
jmunro@greenvillenews.com

South Carolina's unemployment rate ticked up to 6.8 percent in April, but employment rose by 16,000 positions, an indication the job market may be improving slightly, the state Employment Security Commission said Friday.

Job growth in the state included the creation of 200 jobs in manufacturing, the second month in a row for growth in that sector, according to Roosevelt T. Halley, commission executive director. Healthy gains were made in leisure and hospitality (7,100 jobs); professional and business services (3,800); and retail trade (2,200).

"It's looking better," said Oretta Bailey, a Greenville resident shopping downtown Friday. "I'm not holding my breath all the time, scared I'm going to lose my job. But plants still don't seem to be doing much hiring."

Jimmy Lucas, an Easley resident who is working but looking for a higher-paying job, said everybody tells him the economy is picking up, but "I don't see it. The plants, they're laying off in dribbles now. It's not big enough to hit the news. But folks are still losing jobs. I don't know when it will turn around."

Moving counter to South Carolina's trend, the national jobless rate dropped slightly to 5.6 percent from 5.7 percent.

Rajeev Dhawan, director of the Economic Forecasting Center at Georgia State University, predicted that the nation's unemployment rate will continue to decline slightly, averaging 5.6 percent this year. He also said he expects the rate to remain stable in 2005 and drop slightly to an average of 5.5 percent in 2006.

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"The recovery, especially job growth rebound, is still in its infancy," Dhawan said.

Economic Policy Institute economists said that weak job markets continue to persist in most states despite some states seeing job growth spurts in recent months. Over three years after the start of the recession, and 29 months into the official economic recovery, 35 states, including South Carolina, have fewer jobs than when the recession started. The state has about 35,000 fewer jobs than it did when the recession began, according to the Institute.

Still, Greenville County's jobless rate dipped to 4.3 percent in April from 4.4 percent the previous month. The county's labor force totaled 206,280 people, up 205,970 in March and up significantly from 199,720 a year ago.

In April, 8,820 people were searching for work, down from 8,970 in the previous month.

Pickens County's unemployment rate also declined, to 5.3 percent from 5.6 percent the previous month.

Anderson County experienced the largest increase in the jobless rate in the Upstate, jumping to 6.4 percent from 5.6 percent. Anderson's labor force increased to 88,080 in April from 87,150 in March and 85,330 a year ago. The number of people looking for work jumped to 5,630 from 4,890.

"We haven't had any major layoffs," said Wanda Phillips, area manager of the commission's Anderson office. "Rice Mill in Belton did lay off some people, about 34. When you're looking at the whole area, layoffs in other counties can affect us."

She pointed out that the commission doesn't like to see any increase in jobless rates, "but with the number of people we're dealing with, it's not real big."

The labor market appears to be improving, she said.

Several months ago, Walgreens announced it was building a distribution center in Anderson County, hiring about 450 people when it opens in 2007. Also, several announcements of new companies have been made in Pickens County, which also is a help to people in Anderson County looking for work, she said.

Residents looking for jobs at least have hope for the future, she said.

The number of people coming into the office has declined although some of that might be from online filing of claims, she said. Also, hiring appears to have picked up.

"Bosch has been doing some hiring," Phillips said. "A couple of temporary services come in each week to hire."

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State jobless rate up slightly

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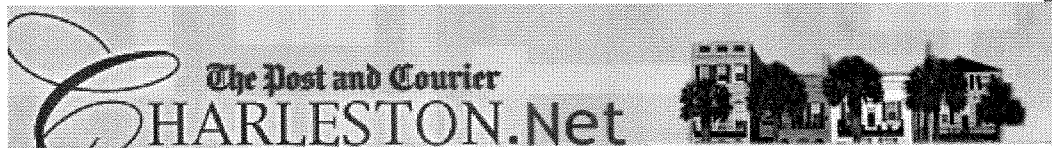
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Story last updated at 9:10 a.m. Saturday, May 22, 2004

Iffy tax funding raises flag amid veto review of budget

Associated Press

COLUMBIA--Gov. Mark Sanford's staff has been huddling in a conference room the past couple days as they lay the groundwork for vetoes in the state's \$5.5 billion spending plan.

On Friday, piles of paper were strewn on that war room's long, dark table after a long night of dissecting the Legislature's budget.

As they work, one item that has bothered Sanford persistently is on the minds of dozens of agency heads: \$90 million generated from tougher tax law enforcement the House and Senate used to shield agencies from deep budget cuts.

That money now is a key part of budgets at agencies -- including the Election Commission, Department of Health and Environmental Control, Department of Social Services and Department of Public Safety -- that touch the lives of most South Carolinians.

A week ago, Sanford wrote legislators and asked them to back off plans to depend on cash that Revenue Director Burnet Maybank sold the Legislature on. Sanford expressed concern about the reliability of that money.

"The uncertainty of when or even if these monies will materialize also makes it nearly impossible for agencies to properly budget," he wrote.

It will be more difficult for some agencies than others. Legislators said five agencies -- DHEC, Mental Health, Disabilities and Special Needs, Corrections and Juvenile Justice -- would be first in line for the money. Only after those agencies get the tax collection would others get paid.



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Legislators revive idea of dividing school district

Posted Friday, May 21, 2004 - 8:45 pm

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By Ron Barnett and Tim Smith
STAFF WRITERS

The question has been asked
and answered before, and now
it could be asked again.

Is the Greenville County School
District too big? Opinions are
divided on the issue that is
making its way through the state
Legislature.

Harriett Cunningham, president
of the Southside High PTA, said
she worries "about the haves
having more and the have-nots
having even less than they have
now."

Jim Keasler of the Greenville
County Taxpayers Association
contends, "Smaller schools are
better, but we're going in the
opposite direction in Greenville."

Eight years after Greenville
County voters defeated a
proposal to divide the state's
largest school district, the state
House has approved a measure
to put the question before voters
again this November.

Voters would be asked whether
they want to create a task force
to study breaking up the district
into three or more smaller ones.

The measure has landed in the
Senate where an objection by
Sen. Ralph Anderson of
Greenville could prevent its
passage before legislators
adjourn for the summer.

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More details

1. The bill puts the following question on the November
ballot:

"Do you favor establishing a task force to be
appointed by the Greenville County Legislative
Delegation to study and make recommendations to
the delegation and the school board as to whether
or not the School District of Greenville County
should be subdivided into not less than three
separate school districts?"

2. Task force meetings would be open to the
public.

3. Its recommendations would be reported to the
Greenville County Legislative Delegation and
school trustees by January 10, 2006.

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However, some lawmakers said the county's legislative delegation could vote to commission the study and bypass voters.

Legislative supporters of the idea say the school district has grown too big and unresponsive. Opponents say voters have already spoken and it would cost schools too much at a time when they need every penny in the classrooms.

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Among other things, the task force would need to consider issues of racial equality, fiscal equity, retiring district debt and giving each district more control of its finances than Greenville County now has, according to the proposed resolution.

Greenville County taxpayers have mixed opinions.

George Campbell of Simpsonville, the parent of a 5-year-old, said he wasn't opposed to the legislation. He said separate districts might lead to a more equitable allotment of funds.

"As it is now, there are some inequities with the way the money is distributed," he said. "If you go down Augusta Road where the money is, you'll see the schools are a lot nicer than in other areas. So I don't think the money is distributed evenly."

However, Mary Ashmore, who has two children in district schools, disagreed. "I don't see what the relevance of it would be," said the 39-year-old Greenville woman.

"There are enough problems with the school district now. They need to focus on the problems that already are there as opposed to adding additional conflict to it."

The November 1996 vote in which residents rejected splitting the school district came after some lawmakers argued smaller districts would give parents more control and a larger sense of community involvement.

About 60 percent of the voters in the referendum voted against the idea.

The current legislation would ask voters in November to decide whether to create a task force to study the issue. Opponents say the costs would be paid for by the school system. Supporters say the legislation doesn't address the costs, which they believe will be minimal.

Tommie Reece, chairwoman of the Greenville County School Board, said she was "disappointed" lawmakers proposed the study.

"It seems we've made so much progress and we're doing so well at this point that I'm sorry to see this kind of thing coming up," she said. "It would serve as a real distraction trying to work with it."

Trustee Leola Robinson said debating the issue again is divisive. She said she thinks the majority of voters like what the schools are doing, though she said she is willing to sit down and discuss the issue with lawmakers.

Sen. Anderson said he opposes the idea because he believes any study proposed by those who want to break up the district would come out in favor of deconsolidation. He said breaking up the district would make it nearly impossible for poor areas to build new schools.

Sen. David Thomas, a Fountain Inn Republican, said Anderson's objection will keep the matter from coming to a vote in the Senate before the Legislature's adjournment June 3.

Any vote would have to be decided by Greenville County's five senators. Sen. Verne Smith of Greer said he opposes it. Thomas said he wants more information. "It's dead," he said.

Sen. Mike Fair, a Greenville Republican who favors breaking up the district, said state lawmakers representing the county are discussing the alternative of pursuing a study even if the legislation stalls in the Senate. He said the delegation could order a study without asking voters.

"We'll get exactly the same thing done," he said. "It won't cost any money. We'll use existing agencies to do the study. That's got a better chance than a toss-up."

Kendra Boehme of Taylors favors separate districts. "Certain areas in northern Greenville County are sometimes left out, and so they might not receive a certain amount of funds," said Boehme, 23.

"If districts are (separated), more funds and opportunities could be brought to different areas of Greenville County," she said.

Staci Noyes, a former public school teacher from Greenville and mother of three, said she understands concerns over funding. Nonetheless, she said she doesn't support a break-up and believes a task force should be assigned to evaluate the district's problems instead.

"Obviously, there are changes and turnover happening right now, and we need a task force to determine what's going to be the next step for Greenville County schools," said Noyes, 33. "But I don't see any reason in breaking up the district."

Ten of Greenville County's 12 House members sponsored the legislation. Seven voted for it, with two, including House Speaker David Wilkins, opposed.

"I thought because we had a fairly recent decision on it and because of the cost of it, it was not a good time to do it," Wilkins said.

Rep. Fletcher Smith, a black Greenville lawyer, said he voted for the measure because he believes the district poorly serves black children. "The school district doesn't listen to anything the black community has to say," he said.

"The school district in Greenville has demonstrated over and over its failed policies with regard to the education of black children and poor white children," Smith said. "There is no accountability in that system. This is a way to do it."

Former Gov. Dick Riley, who served as U.S. Secretary of Education during the Clinton administration, was a high school student when Greenville County was consolidated into one school district. He said that revisiting the issue is a mistake.

"It's a mistake to get sidetracked," he said. "We have so many things we need to do."

Rivers Stilwell, a member of the Alliance for Quality Education board, called it a "cruel irony" that deconsolidation was brought up the week of the 50th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education that led to the nationwide desegregation of public schools.

"It's a complete step in the wrong direction," he said. "I think it'd be a travesty to deconsolidate the school district."

Paul Krohney, executive director of the South Carolina School Boards Association, said there is no evidence that students perform better or worse depending on the size of the district.

"There is no magic size," he said. "But it's best left to the local government and populace to decide."

Two counties — Marion and Orangeburg — have consolidated districts in the past decade, according to the state Education Department. In 1950, there were 1,220 school districts in South Carolina. Now there are 86.



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Safety concerns surface as lakes grow crowded

Posted Friday, May 21, 2004 - 6:39 pm

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By Jason Zacher
ENVIRONMENTAL WRITER
jzacher@greenvillenews.com

In 40 years of boating and fishing, Alex Alexander has seen a lot.

He likes remembering the 20-pound bass he hauled out of Lake Hartwell last year. He doesn't like to remember the speed boat that flew into a tree a few weeks ago or the two teenage girls who smashed into each other on waverunners.

"People don't realize how dangerous it is out on that lake," he said as he tied his boat up at a Portman Marina dock. "There are a lot of crazy people out there."

The biggest part of the boating season is set to begin in seven days — more than 10 million people will visit Lake Hartwell this year alone — but frequent boaters and marina workers said it is getting crazier, especially as the state Department of Natural Resources struggles to pay for officers on the water, or even gas for their boats.

DNR officers should be one of the things that takes a priority in the state budget, said state Rep. Robert Brown, D-Hollywood, a member of the state House Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee.

"It's a disgrace," he said. "We



Chad Byce of Anderson takes off in his boat with Matt Byce at Portman Marina at Lake Hartwell. Staff/Tanya Ackerman

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always use the phrase that there is only so much money, but some of these programs should come up higher on the priority list."

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The number of people who died on South Carolina waters more than doubled last year from 14 to 33, which quickly reversed a 10-year downward trend.

Accidents have climbed steadily over the past five years and the number of people hurt climbed until last year.

Nobody knows why so many more people were killed while having fun last year. Some attribute it to the high lake levels, but a lack of DNR officers patrolling the lakes encourages bad behavior, said marina worker Bracken Burdette. There are only seven officers that must patrol the three lakes and the rest of the four Upstate counties, seven days a week. There should be 20, said Lt. Robert McCullough. "They know DNR isn't around so they're going to get it on," Burdette said.

There should be 10 or 12 more, said Lt. Robert McCullough, but the agency is short about 90 officers after years of budget cuts.

"You don't speed when you see the Highway Patrol," he said. "The lack of officers is significant at times. We're not able to have the presence we had in the past."

Overall, boats registered in South Carolina is about the same as it was three years ago, said Lt. Robert McCullough. The number of boats registered in the Upstate has dropped from 53,600 to 51,300 from 2000 to 2003.

McCullough said last year's deaths are still a pretty low number, given 46 counties, 3,000 miles of coastline, 800 miles of rivers and 460,000 acres of lakes.

What he hates is his estimate that 27 of last year's 33 deaths could have been prevented by wearing a life jacket — like one man who jumped into a lake to cool off and never came back up.

Chad Byce, 23, said boating isn't that hard. The new North Greenville College graduate said it's all about thinking and common sense.

"The people who bother me are the dummies who drink," he said. "You wouldn't get behind the wheel of a car drunk — why would you do it in a boat?"

Driving is a common analogy made by boaters, but boating on Lake Hartwell isn't exactly the same. There are no lanes, no speed limits and no requirement for experience before you head out on your new boat.

Experienced boaters said they can spot a weekend warrior or new boater a mile away — and they keep their distance.

This month, authorities said a man with a 5-day-old, 34-foot Fountain speed boat lost control and was thrown from the boat. After he was thrown, the boat kept flying and wound up split in half by an oak tree, 30 feet away from the water, according to DNR.

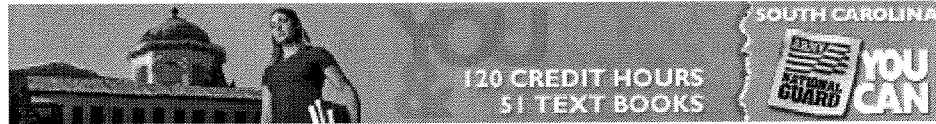
"It's funny only because nobody got hurt," McCullough said. "It's lucky nobody was on the shore or in the woods."

Boaters and officers alike said the most important thing to do this summer is think, pay attention and don't become impaired.

"There are a lot of distractions," Alexander said. "You can take your eyes off the water and in a second hit the side of another boat and kill six or seven people."

"I take it very seriously."

Jason Zacher covers the environment and natural resources. He can be reached at 298-4272.



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Beasley, Ravenel chart endorsements

Posted Friday, May 21, 2004 - 6:39 pm

By DAN HOOVER
STAFF WRITER
dhooover@greenvillenews.com

Republican U.S. Senate candidates continued their endorsement flurry Friday, 17 days before their June 8 primary showdown.

The 13,000-member South Carolina Association of Realtors gave its backing to former Gov. David Beasley, and Charleston developer Thomas Ravenel prepared to launch a "Veterans for Ravenel" group headed by a pair of retired generals.

Co-chairing the group will be Lt. Gen. George M. Seignious II, a former president of The Citadel, and Maj. Gen. Thomas J. Thorne. Both are Citadel graduates and combat veterans of World War II.


Ravenel said he has "tremendous respect for these men and what they have done for our country. They know first hand that sometimes we have to pay the ultimate sacrifice in order to defend our nation and bring lasting peace to the world," Ravenel said.

Also, Andrew Wittman, a 4th Congressional District Democratic primary candidate, launched his "ground campaign" in Union County, knocking on residential doors.

Today, 4th District Republicans will hold a picnic-stump meeting near Greer at 11 a.m. The event is on private property on Suber Road near the State 14 intersection and is open to the public.

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In making the endorsement, David Lockwood, the Realtors' candidate screening committee chairman, said it came "after careful consideration of (Beasley's) qualifications and responses to our questions and those of the other candidates."

Last week, Adjutant General Stan Spears endorsed Beasley, and Monday U.S. Rep. Gresham Barrett of Westminster endorsed Greenville Congressman Jim DeMint's Senate candidacy.

While John Simpkins, a Furman University political scientist, questioned the value of endorsements, Winthrop University's Aldolphus Belk said, "They can be important for candidates who are trying to demonstrate their electability."

"The most important are those from people or groups with close connection to voters," Belk said.

Wittman began a door-to-door campaign in Union County aimed at visiting another 1,500 homes on top of the 1,000 previously done, his campaign said.

Wittman, of Taylors, is opposed by another Greenville Democrat, Brandon Brown.

DeMint's Senate candidacy opened the seat. The three-person Republican field consists of former Rep. Bob Inglis of Travelers Rest, Carole Wells of Spartanburg, a state Employment Security Commission member, and Greenville retiree Jack Adams.

"For far too long the concerns of the people of Union County have been overlooked," Wittman said.

Union is overshadowed by the district's two other counties, Greenville and Spartanburg, the state's first and fourth most populous counties.

Wittman, a Marine combat veteran, a former state and federal police officer, and a minister is seeking his first elected office, as is Brown, a funeral home executive.

—

Dan Hoover covers politics and can be reached at 298-4883.

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Richardson seeks school-board change

Wants nine members instead of 11

BY DIANE KNICH, *The Island Packet*

Other stories by Diane Knich

Published Saturday, May 22nd, 2004

State Sen. Scott Richardson wants to restructure the Beaufort County school board and says the move could reduce conflict among board members and build public confidence in the body.

Richardson's plan includes reducing the 11-member board to nine members. Six of those members would be elected to represent the district in which they live and three would be elected from the county at large. The board now has no at-large seats.

The Hilton Head Island Republican said he also would recommend that the at-large member who gets the most votes become the board's chairman. Now, board members vote on who will be chairman.

"We had at-large seats in the past and got away from it, and I think that was a mistake," Richardson said.

But board Chairman Earl Campbell says the change would hurt minority representation on the school board, which has five African-American members. Even Richardson admits the change would come under a lot of scrutiny from the U.S. Justice Department, which must approve any changes to voting districts in the state.

Still, Richardson said he wanted to make the change because the school board has a lot of internal conflicts and "regional thinking." Having at-large members who represent the entire county might reduce conflict among board members, he said.

He said his plan was in reaction to hearing numerous complaints about the school board.

"I hear from the public that the school board has problems. ... There's something (about the board) in the newspaper almost every day," he said.

Campbell said, "I could not support the plan. It will decrease minority representation on the board. ... The current plan benefits minorities."

The school board chairman said he also wants to know whether Richardson's plan would apply to Beaufort County Council. The school board now has the same structure as the council.

Richardson, chairman of the Beaufort County Legislative Delegation, said the group could ask state lawmakers to restructure the school board, but he doesn't know whether they have the authority to change County Council's districts.

Last week, Richardson sent a letter to school board members about the proposed changes along with maps showing the six new districts. Three of the six districts are north of the Broad River, two are south of the river and one falls primarily south of the river but extends into northern Beaufort County.

Richardson has asked Campbell to arrange a time in July when he can make a presentation of the plan to the board. He said

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he was doing that as a courtesy and doesn't need board approval to move forward.

He also said he plans to set up community meetings in the fall to find out if voters favor the switch. If they do, the delegation can approve the change, he said.

If the delegation supports the change, Richardson said, the earliest it would pass is February 2005.

Richardson said he has talked with other state lawmakers from the county and thought the idea had at least some support, but he said he could not speak for other members.

The plan represents a return to the way the school board was structured before 1992.

County Council held a referendum in November 1991 asking voters if they wanted to switch the council from six district seats and three at-large seats to 11 single-member districts. Voters approved the change, which also took into account population changes from the 1990 census.

In February 1992, the school board voted to follow County Council's lead but did not have to do it. It was pushed by Vicki Mullen and Sara Breedlove, at-large board members from Hilton Head.

At the time of the board vote, there were two at-large board members from Hilton Head and one from Beaufort.

Richardson's plan to return the board to the structure it had before could face opposition from the Justice Department. Under the 1965 Voting Rights Act, South Carolina is one of nine states that must get department approval on changes to voting districts.

Campbell said when Richardson proposed a similar plan in 2002, he contacted the Justice Department. Representatives told him the department was unlikely to approve such a plan because it could disenfranchise minority voters.

Although Richardson said his plan would lead to a more effective board, he also said it "will come under a lot of scrutiny (from the Justice Department)."

Eric Holland, a spokesman for the Justice Department, said that when the department reviews changes in voting districts, it considers whether the change will hurt minority voters, a trend he calls "retrogression."

Campbell said members from southern Beaufort County, who are more likely to be white, could win most at-large seats because there are more registered voters in the southern part of the county.

According to the county Board of Elections and Voter Registration, the county has 79,958 registered voters, with 45,063 in the southern half of the county and 34,895 in the northern half of the county.

Although there are more registered voters in the southern part of the county, there are more residents in northern Beaufort County. According to 2002 census estimates, the total population of Beaufort County is 127,977. Regional breakdowns were not available from the 2002 numbers, but the 2000 census calculated 67,486 residents north of the Broad River and 53,451 to the south.

Board member Rick Caporale, who represents Hilton Head Island, said he was willing to look at the plan. "It's interesting, although it needs more discussion," Caporale said.

He also said he didn't think Richardson's plan was "subversive" or aimed at unseating African-American board members.

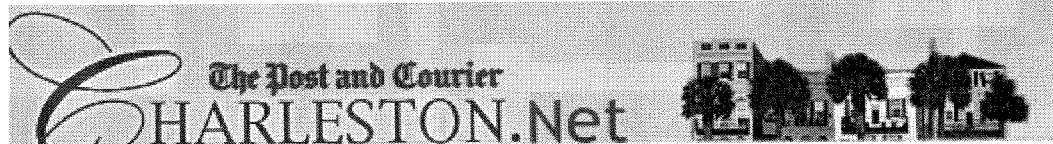
Laura Bush, board member from Bluffton, said she had a lot of questions about Richardson's plan because "we have a board now that looks like the community."

But, she said, "the main question is why is he proposing the change?"

Contact Diane Knich at 706-8141 or dknich@islandpacket.com.

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Story last updated at 9:08 a.m. Saturday, May 22, 2004

'Bobtailing' suit gets more serious

The S.C. Supreme Court's decision this week to hear a challenge to a new law correctly dubbed "the kitchen sink bill" should have gotten the state Senate's attention. The court's agreement to take original jurisdiction says this is no frivolous suit. If senators really want to ensure that the state has a chance at some major new investment, they should pass a new "clean" Life Sciences bill that provides economic incentives for the biotech industry.

The Life Sciences law the General Assembly did pass started off as a "clean" economic incentives bill, but got waylaid in the Senate -- and, later in a conference committee -- with dozens of unrelated, major amendments, including the establishment of a controversial new four-year college. Gov. Mark Sanford protested with his veto, which was quickly overridden.

The governor talked about suing, but the lawsuit actually was filed by a private citizen from Greenville, Edward D. Sloan Jr., who is well-known for taking state and local governments to court. Mr. Sloan asked the Supreme Court for a declaratory judgment that the new law violates the constitutional provision that the title to a bill can pertain to only one subject. The court's agreement to hear the suit directly rather than sending it first to the circuit court means there could be an answer to the law's legality within the year.

But that won't be soon enough for the Commerce Department staff. We're told the legal uncertainty about the state's incentive package could put them at a disadvantage at a gathering of members of the biotech industry in June. Commerce Secretary Bob Faith has been urging the Senate to pass the House's new version of the original Life Sciences bill -- without all those questionable amendments -- to ease industry concerns. The department has been helping to recruit a large pharmaceutical prospect for the Greenville area.

There are those who are trying to downplay the uncertainty created by the Supreme Court's decision to hear the suit. The



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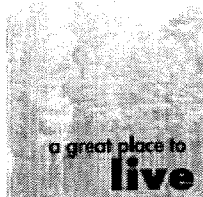
chairman of Greenville's economic development group was quoted in an Associated Press story as saying he believed the economic portion of the bill would survive because of the court's ability "to take out all the bobtailing stuff and leave it as a clean Life Sciences legislation." He can hope.

Rather than take any chances, the Senate -- which put most of that "bobtailing stuff" on the bill -- should quickly give second and final reading to the new Life Sciences Act early next week. Further, it should take the pledge to stop that "bobtailing stuff" in the future.



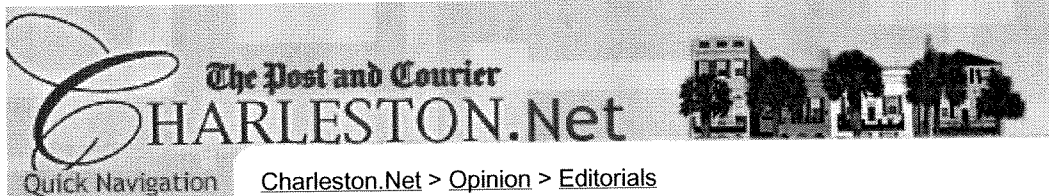
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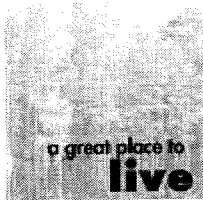
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Posted Friday, May 21, 2004 - 6:39 pm

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*Inez Tenenbaum is a solid
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candidate for the seat held by

retiring U.S. Sen. Fritz Hollings.

Inez Tenenbaum has been an outstanding state education superintendent and she's a strong choice to carry the Democratic banner for the U.S. Senate election to fill the seat being vacated by U.S. Sen. Fritz Hollings. Tenenbaum deserves the party's nomination in the June 8 primary.

She'll face one of six Republicans vying for the seat as well as possible third-party candidates. Tenenbaum's Democratic opponent, former police officer Ben Frasier, doesn't appear to be running an aggressive campaign and did not return numerous phone calls from this newspaper.

Since Tenenbaum was first elected education superintendent in 1998, a state not normally known for student academic achievement has seen impressive gains. High school seniors, for instance, have improved their average SAT score by 38 points in the past five years — the largest gain in the country and four times the national increase. Other standardized test scores also have risen appreciably. A national report card from the respected magazine Education Week, meanwhile, ranked South Carolina No. 1 in the nation for improving teacher quality in both 2003 and 2004, and seventh in the nation for improving academic standards and accountability.

Tenenbaum's record as education superintendent is sufficient by itself to recommend her for the Democratic nomination for Senate. She emphasizes education in her Senate campaign. She believes the federal government is demanding higher standards of students but failing to provide sufficient funding. She would work to close the gap. She also pledges to expand health care coverage to more South Carolina families and strengthen Medicare.

Tenenbaum's candidacy is particularly important in that it may help to revitalize South



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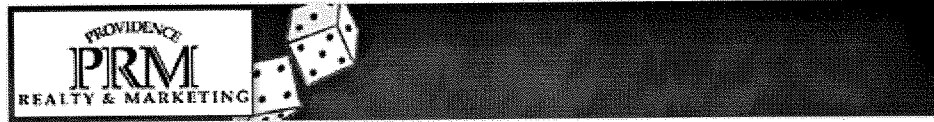
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Carolina's Democratic Party, which has steadily been losing both elected officials and loyal rank-and-file members. She is a solid candidate with an appeal that crosses party lines.

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Democrats have an excellent candidate for U.S. Senate in Inez Tenenbaum.



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Posted on Sat, May. 22, 2004

The State

Perry best choice for House 87

REP. LARRY KOON says his 20 years in the State House will be important as the state continues to grapple with difficult budget choices. He knows a lot about the budget, has some creative reform ideas that could help manage rising costs for important programs, and is receptive to crucial overhauls of the tax code and the executive branch of government.

But if he has a problem with the way the Legislature has handled the budget crisis — using Band-Aids to delay some tough calls and shunting others to agency directors — he doesn't let on. He may play an important role, but it is in service to a system that has failed us.

And his creative ideas take a back seat to the House leadership's priorities. If he breaks with the leadership, it's to line up with his constituents — a goal he considers supreme, even when he believes they're wrong.

Fortunately, Mr. Koon's early hesitation about seeking another term in the north central Lexington County District 87 attracted two appealing alternatives to the race.

David Perry and Nikki Haley both understand that legislators need to vote as they believe is best even when voters, who may not know all the facts, disagree.

Both are far more convincing than Mr. Koon in their assurances that they will go to the State House to think — not simply to follow party leaders' orders. Both appear to be more committed to addressing the needs of our public schools — both the high-quality, well-funded ones in their district and the poor ones in rural areas.

And while both know a lot less than Mr. Koon about the specific choices facing legislators, both understand that the way the Legislature is handling the budget crisis — and budgeting in general — has to change.

Ms. Haley is bright, energetic and open-minded; she's eager to learn about ideas that don't match her pre-conceived notions. But she has much to learn.

Mr. Perry has a more realistic view of how far running government like a business and cutting waste and duplication will go, and how many difficult decisions still await legislators who get that far. And he seems to truly understand something that a shocking number of legislators simply don't get: If people want government to deliver services, they have to pay taxes; and the more services they want, the higher their taxes will be.

Nikki Haley and David Perry both show a great deal of potential; Mr. Perry, we believe, is closer to realizing that potential. Voters would do well to let him do so.

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